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Committee of the Whole considers STR renewals

By James Windell

In 2025 the South Haven City Council passed a Short-Term Rental ordinance requiring all STR owners to register and have their STR approved in order to rent to visitors.

Sounds like a reasonable requirement, right?

But not so fast. The problem is that going into March, 2026, with the tourist season just weeks away only, about 20 percent of the approximately 700 STRS in the City have completed the process to receive their license. This leaves about 500 STRs in limbo for the summer of 2026 when tourists will be flooding South Haven looking for houses to rent.

This was the STR situation as presented at a South Haven City Council Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on March 2, 2026.

The core problem, as indicated by City staff, is that since the City will not be able to meet the upcoming deadline for license renewals, those who are awaiting processing risk being penalized – even though they applied on time, paid the necessary fees, and followed staff direction.

However, at the COW, staff proposed issuing conditional STR licenses under the new ordinance to keep one uniform licensing regime. Conditional licenses would let owners continue renting (including honoring existing summer reservations) while staff completes zoning compliance determinations and inspections. Kelly Getman-Dissette, Zoning Administrator for the City, emphasized this is not intended to "skirt the process," and that enforcement, inspections, and zoning reviews would continue. But she pointed out that conditional licensing is also intended to help stagger renewal the timing, so licenses don't all come due at once in the future.

Both members of the public who spoke at the meeting as well as City Council members raised concerns that inspections and zoning review could jeopardize long-held STR rights, especially where prior work (for instance, adding a bedroom years ago) may not have been permitted. Staff explained that STRs are now treated as non-conforming uses, meaning owners generally can't enlarge, extend, intensify, or expand the nonconforming use (for example, by expanding the rental areas). Maintenance work was described as generally acceptable, though remodeling work would require individualized review. City Attorney Dave Eberle explained that lawful nonconforming determinations depend on when the use was established and the ordinance in effect at that time.

With the meeting coming to a close, City Council members at the COW voted to place the item on the City Council agenda for the meeting that would follow the COW.

Spoiler alert: At the City Council meeting that followed the COW meeting, the Council voted to amend the STR ordinance to allow the granting of a conditional license to STRs who have not completed the process yet. Eberle said that the conditional license would be granted to those STRs that were already licensed as STRs, had submitted a complete licensing application, and had paid the necessary fees.

SHAES constructs historical table

By Tom Renner

The firehouse is "home" to first responders whose 24-hour shifts include eating meals together. A growing staff at South Haven Area Emergency Services (SHAES) created a challenge of getting everyone around the table at mealtime.

Some imaginative thinking by firefighters, combined with the creative work of two local businesses, Goose Nest Woodworks and Lakeshore Iron, resulted in the construction of a table that is not only larger, but is steeped in the history of the department. The table surface consists of patient backboards no longer in service. Its metal base features the logo of the department connected by a ladder. Embedded in epoxy on the table are logos and other historical memorabilia.

Women who Care raise money for non-profits

By James Windell

In 2015, four South Haven women decided to come together to make a greater impact on the community.

Having heard about an organization called Women Who Care in Jackson, Michigan, the quartet of women adopted the model of the Jackson group to create their own organization to make a difference in the South Haven community.

According to President Laura Hayward, one of the four founding members of South Haven's Women Who Care, the model they use has been a boon to area nonprofits. To date they have contributed more than $300,000 to worthy organizations in the South Haven area.

At the most recent meeting of Women Who Care at Sophie's Steakhouse & Bar in South Haven, more than 50 members of the group listened to the pitches for funding by three local nonprofits.

South Haven's Women Who Care traces its origin to a broader movement that began in Jackson, Michigan in 2006, when Karen Dunigan founded the first Women Who Care group as a simple, high-impact way for women to pool donations for local nonprofits.

"Since that time, there are many Women Who Care groups," says Hayward. "There may be hundreds or thousands across the country. We just used Karen's ideas to make it work in our area."

The original model was intentionally easy to replicate. Groups would meet quarterly for one hour; each member would donate a set amount (usually $100) to a nonprofit; and the group would collectively select a local nonprofit to receive the pooled funds.

"Pam Utke, Wendy Dubuisson, Jane Strebeck and myself started Women Who Care," says Hayward. "At our first meeting on December 2, 2015, we raised $5,000 at that meeting for a nonprofit organization."

She notes that their main purpose – then and now – was "to support and learn about the non-profit organizations/ groups in the greater South Haven area."

Hayward adds that South Haven's Women Who Care is a group of caring women who want to help. "We have all ages of women involved," she says. "Our group is unique because we are just a funnel for those women. We have no bank accounts or funds as a group, but we collect the monies that go to the selected, each member wrote a check for $100 for the organization.

"A presenter may speak about any group they choose as long as money going to the organization is tax deductible," notes Hayward. "By doing it this way, each woman that gives, receives the tax benefit. Many women have also discovered that this is a wonderful way to learn about organizations in the area."

Although the group has no specific goal for membership, Hayward's philosophy is the more the merrier. "The more members we have," she says, "the more we give to the non-profit organizations. And 100 percent of the checks collected go to the chosen organization."

For more information about joining Women Who Care, Hayward suggests attending the next meeting, which will be held in May, 2026, or email womenwhocare.sh@gmail.com. Interested women can follow Women Who Care – South Haven MI on Facebook.

recipient organizations."

At the March 4th meeting, three local organizations made their 5-minute pitches after which the members of Women Who Care asked questions. Then, the members voted by secret ballot as to which of the three groups they would support. On this night it would be Crowded Tables, an organization affiliated with Hope Church in South Haven, that provides meals for people facing food insecurity. After Crowded Table was

SH swimmers to compete in eight state championship events

Zander Duncan

By Tom Renner

South Haven High School swimmers will compete in eight events at the MHSAA Division 3 State Championships to be held March 13-14 at the Holland Aquatic Center.

Zander Duncan has qualified in the 50 freestyle, 100 backstroke, 100 butterfly and 500 freestyle while Calvin Dissette can compete in the 100 breaststroke, 200 individual medley and 500 freestyle.

The Rams have also qualified in the 200 freestyle relay and 200 medley relay. Joining Zander Duncan and Calvin Dissette will be Carson Dissette and Julius Filbrandt.

Calvin Dissette

Historic Carnegie gift returns to Paw Paw Library

PAW PAW - More than a century after Andrew Carnegie helped bring Paw Paw its first public library, his legacy is returning to the community.

The Paw Paw District Library has received a $10,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of Carnegie Libraries 250, a national initiative celebrating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and honoring the approximately 1,280 Carnegie libraries that continue to serve communities across the United States.

Scottish immigrant Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,681 free public libraries across the country between 1886 and 1917. Paw Paw was among the communities that benefited from this historic program. In 1920, the village opened its Carnegie-funded library at 129 Kalamazoo St., one of 61 Carnegie libraries built in Michigan.

Local residents also played a key role in establishing the library. In 1917, Mrs. Florence Harvey donated the private book collection of her late husband, the Rev. E. H. Harvey, to help start a public library. Soon after, the Coterie Club, a Paw Paw women's organization dedicated to cultural and educational enrichment, contributed its lending library. Their efforts were followed by a $3,000 pledge from Mrs. Caroline Sellick in memory of her husband, William J. Sellick, to purchase land for the new library.

Today, about 750 Carnegie libraries still operate in their original buildings, while others, like Paw Paw's library, have moved and adapted to meet their communities' changing needs.

"This grant connects our past with our future," said Library Director Gretchen Evans. "Andrew Carnegie believed libraries should be free and open to everyone. For more than 100 years, the Paw Paw library has carried that idea forward."

The $10,000 gift will help support the development of a new outdoor library space next to the current building, featuring a pavilion, small amphitheater, native plantings, and walking paths.

"Libraries have always been places where people gather to learn and share ideas," Evans said. "This new outdoor space expands that tradition beyond our walls and creates another welcoming place for the community."

The new outdoor space is expected to open in June 2026.

Tech Culinary Arts and Catering Management students place in ProStart Competition

LAWRENCE - Van Buren Tech's Culinary Arts & Catering Management students earned fourth place in Knife Skills, fourth place in Culinary, and fifth place in Tabletop Design at the recently held ProStart Competition hosted by the Michigan Hospitality Foundation.

Knife Skills

Each contestant selected four knife cuts to present to the judges, along with two knife cuts randomly assigned by the judges. Fabrication was judged on consistency, accuracy, skill, technique, sanitation, and safety.

Fourth Place - Levi Brooks, Lawton Community Schools.

Culinary

Teams were tasked with creating a unique three-course meal consisting of a starter, entrée, and dessert that demonstrated their culinary knowledge, skills, and creative abilities.

Fourth Place - Levi Hostetler, Decatur Public Schools; Alexis Garcia, Bloomingdale High School; Riley Weller, Lawton Community Schools; Lorenzo Moreno, Lawrence Public Schools. The culinary team was also awarded a $2,000 scholarship.

Tabletop Design

For this year's theme, Spring Has Sprung, teams were tasked with four components: developing a menu, setting a table, presenting the table, and demonstrating their ability to answer critical-thinking questions about their table.

Fifth Place - Adriana Rivas and Brianna Steadman, Paw Paw Public Schools; Sabeiva Rodriguez, Mattawan Consolidated Schools

Knights of Columbus hold March Magic Basketball Challenge

Photos courtesy/Paw Paw Knights of Columbus

The Paw Paw Knights of Columbus recently sponsored the annual March Magic Basketball Challenge at the Van Buren Intermediate School District's (VBISD) Bert Goens Learning Center for approximately 80 students there. The Knights of Columbus wanted to bring some excitement to the students of "March Madness" experienced by schools across the country during this time of year. The Knights worked with the students to perform a variety of basketball skills they had been practicing for the past several months.

The students were also treated to a basketball game while being paired with some public safety officers from the Lawrence Police and Fire departments as well as the Van Buren Sheriff's Office and Michigan State Police. The day concluded with a student Free Throw Contest and a Celebrity 3-Point Contest with the officers and school staff competing (firemen were in full turnout gear).

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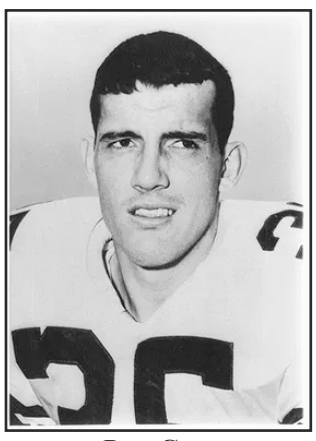
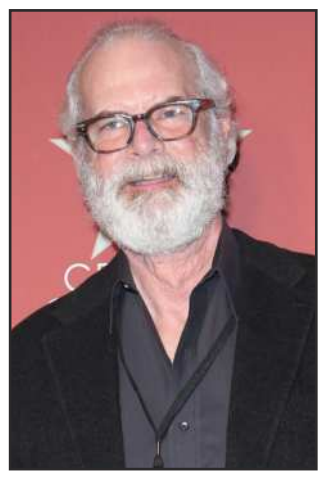
2ND FRONT PAGE

City of Bangor goes to Hollywood

Jennifer Farmer



Pete Gent



Michael Shamus Wiles

Kate Swanborg

By James Windell

How many people from any small town in America end up in Hollywood being in the movie business?

One or maybe two. At most.

However, the City of Bangor, with a population that hovers right around 2,000, has sent five people to Hollywood.

The most recent person to make the transition from Bangor to Hollywood was the daughter of Dan and Lynne Farmer.

"Jennifer was a 1993 graduate of Bangor High School, and she was lucky enough to work with Dan Skarrit as her theatre teacher for all four years of high school," says Lynne Farmer, the Mayor of Bangor. "She went to Hollywood in the early 2000's and she was in the movie '5 Year Engagement' with Jason Segel and Emily Blunt."

Jennifer was also in many commercials during her time in Hollywood, the most memorable being the "Cat and the Hat" commercials with Mike Meyers and one with Martha Stewart.

The very first Bangor native to make it in Hollywood was Pete Gent, who graduated from Bangor High School in 1960. The son of Charlie and Elizabeth Gent, of Bangor, Pete Gent played with the Dallas Cowboys from 1964 through 1968. Gent joined the Cowboys as an undrafted free agent out of Michigan State University and played wide receiver with the Cowboys before being traded in 1969 to the New York Giants.

After his NFL career ended, Gent wrote North Dallas Forty, a novel inspired by his experiences with the Cowboys, which became a bestseller and a major film. The movie starred Nick Nolte as Pete Gent in 1979. Gent would go on to write several books, including The Concrete Heros, which was about the 1960 Bangor Boys Basketball team going to the state finals.

Gent's major creative contribution to film was as a screenwriter. He wrote the screenplay for North Dallas Forty, which offered a gritty, semi-autobiographical look at professional football.

Thirteen years after Gent graduated from Bangor High School, Mike Wiles, the son of Roy and Marylou Wiles, graduated. Wiles got his taste for acting in Bangor High School plays and he eventually ended up in Hollywood where he had roles in TV shows and in movies.

Wiles had roles in Malcom in The Middle and The X Files, and also appeared in the movies Pearl Harbor, Fight Club, and Transformers (2007). However, Wiles has had roles in over 100 films and TV shows since the 1980's.

Mike Wiles' younger brother, Tim Wiles, graduated from Bangor High School in 1980. He followed his brother to Hollywood in the 1990's, where he became a senior prop-master. "This means he gets to decide what props go into movies," Farmer says. "In the movie 50 First Dates, starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, Wiles included a jar of Freestone pickles made in Bangor."

Among Tim Wiles' film credits as prop manager are several Adam Sandler movies, as well as The Longest Yard, Batman and Robin, Charlies Angels, and Pixels.

Kate Skarritt Swanborg, who graduated from Bangor High School in 1989, also made the trek to Hollywood. There she went to work for Steven Spielberg at his Dream Works studio.

Although she did not appear as an actress in any movies, Kate Swanborg is credited in major DreamWorks films – usually in behind the scenes roles such as "additional crew," "production department," and "production management." She worked on several well known animated films, including: Kung Fu Panda, How to Train Your Dragon, Megamind, and Kung Fu Panda 2. In more recent DreamWorks projects, Swanborg has senior technical/strategic roles.

Why have so many Bangor High School graduates gone on to careers in Hollywood? That question was posed to Lynne Farmer.

"Bangor was so blessed to have Dan Skarritt as the theatre teacher here for years," says Farmer. "He was such an influence on all the people who went from Bangor High School to Hollywood. In fact, our three children had him for theatre and all said how much they loved his passion and that he inspired all his students in the fine arts."

Farmer describes Skarritt as the "magic sauce" that was responsible for so many Bangor students making it in the movies and in TV shows. Kate Skarritt Swanborg, who works for Steven Spielberg, is Dan and Jackie Skarritt's daughter.

"The only person who was probably not inspired by Dan Skarritt was Pete Gent," says Farmer. She notes that Skarritt is now retired from Bangor High School, but still stays involved in local theater.

Driver leads police on high speed chase

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

ANTWERP TOWNSHIP - A 58-year-old Plainwell man arrested March 4, following a high-speed chase in Antwerp Township, faces several charges, according to a press release from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office.

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott reported that a Van Buren County Sheriff's deputy attempted to perform a traffic stop on a vehicle for a motor vehicle code violation. The vehicle fled westbound on Red Arrow Highway at speeds around 80 mph. The vehicle turned north onto County Road 652 before turning into a subdivision. The vehicle dropped speeds and continued through the subdivision at speeds under 10 mph before returning to County Road 652 and coming to a stop. Sheriff Abbott said the driver was apprehended without further incident. A search of the driver and vehicle led to the seizure of a large amount of methamphetamine, as well as packaging materials and scales. The driver was subsequently transported to the Van Buren County Jail on charges of fleeing and eluding, possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine, driving while license suspended and no insurance on a motor vehicle.

Sheriff's Office Central Dispatchers take over 3,300 phone calls in February

For the month of February, Van Buren County Sheriff's Office Central Dispatchers took 3,306 phone calls. Uniform Response had 303 traffic stops in February, putting the two-month total at 594. Uniform Response handled 654 calls for service in February, putting the total for the year at 1,418.

Uniform Response handled a traffic crash just outside the Decatur Village Limits involving an SUV versus semi. The driver of the SUV had to be extricated by the Decatur-Hamilton Fire Department. The driver was transported to the hospital with life threatening injuries. The other two occupants in the SUV and the semi driver were able to avoid serious injuries. The accident remains under investigation. "The preliminary investigation showed the semi driver went over the centerline and caused the crash," said Van Burfen County Sheriff Daniel Abbott.

Update from last week's weekly news updates. A suspect was identified from the dinosaur lawn ornament stolen in Geneva Township. The dinosaur was recovered and returned to the victim. The suspect was charged and arrested for the incident.

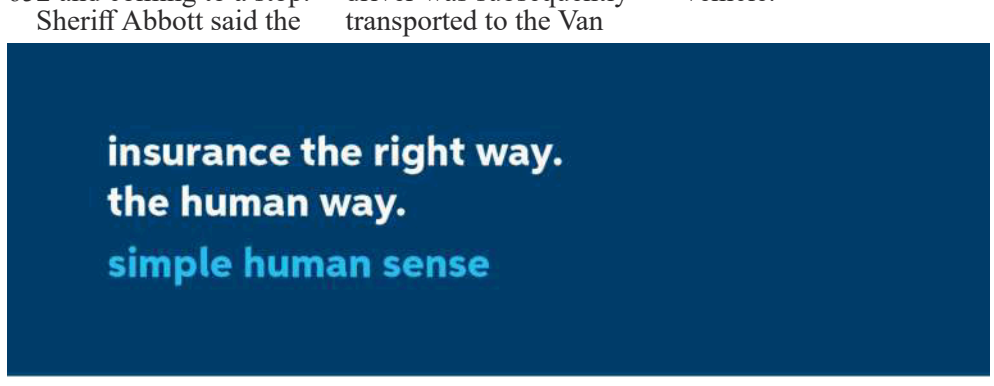
Uniform Response attempted a traffic stop in Antwerp Township for a motor vehicle code violation. The suspect driver from Plainwell attempted to flee the Sheriff's deputy but eventually stopped after a pursuit ensued. Deputies found during the vehicle search a large amount of methamphetamine, as well as packaging materials and scales. The driver was lodged for flee and elude, possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine, driving while license suspended, and no vehicle insurance.

Uniform Response took a fraud complaint that happened in Antwerp Township. The victim sent over $65,000 to his online "girlfriend" which turned out to be in Singapore using crypto.

"I cannot keep stressing enough about all the online scams that go on just like the one above. I personally received several calls/texts this past few weeks about a scam which reads at the top of an official looking form: State of Michigan in the Detroit Municipal Court County of Wayne. It's advising you have a parking violation asking for payment through a QR Code attached to scan. That will obviously take you to a fake site to steal your money. Another one I was called about was a loan company asking for charges due to late fees. Literally on a weekly basis criminals are looking for different ways to steal your money over the internet. Stay vigilant and don't fall for any of these. If you ever have a question about it being possibly fake, call any law enforcement agency and we can vet things for you," said Sheriff Abbott.

Uniform Response handled a domestic violence call in Hartford Township. "Upon arrival, the male suspect slammed the door and refused to open it. The suspect yelled he was going to kill himself and people inside the residence started screaming. Entry was immediately made due to the exigent circumstances. The suspect would not comply with deputies, and a physical altercation took place. The suspect was lodged for the incident," said Abbott.

"Our 911 Dispatch Director Mike Hostetler attended the Michigan Interoperable Communication Conference in Muskegon. It was a three-day conference that covered topics such as advantages of interoperable communications, innovations in communications, data sharing, emergency response, evolutionary changes in interoperable communications, and the importance of building strong relationships across agencies," said Sheriff Abbott.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Scott Club receives grant from Michigan Arts & Culture Council

By James Windell

For the fourth consecutive year the Scott Club has been awarded grant funding from the Michigan Arts & Culture Council.

Scott Club President, Carol Anderson Kunze, says the Scott Club is delighted to be awarded $43,100 in Mission Support grants which must be used by the end of the year.

"This fiscal year 2026 grant awarded has three components," Kunze says. "and those three components are operations, facility improvements, and transportation."

She also indicates that the grant will require a 25% cash match. "We have to match 25 % of the total, and a final report must include use of the grant funds as well as the match," Kunze remarked.

Kunze says that the Scott Club depends on donations and grants for approximately 75% of operational expenses and all facility improvements. "So, these funds will provide a significant and needed financial boost for the remainder of 2026," she says.

She also added that the successful grant application was the result of collaboration of the Grants team that includes Megan McCollister Iussig, Anna Krajecki, Sally Rehkopf and herself, the Building and Grounds Committee, comprised of Anna Krajecki, Jay Campbell, Carol Anderson Kunze, Mari Fifelski and Kris Ayers, and the Program Committee, including Anna Krajecki and Julie Rubin.

Kunze indicated that there are stipulations about which types of operational expenses can be funded by grant monies, but she says that the club will use operations funds for building expenses and programs. These include program honoraria, publicity, utilities, insurance, supplies and technology. In addition, they are looking to improve their audio/visual equipment.

"Responding to feedback, we have identified audio/visual updates to improve the program and concert experience for attendees through an upgraded sound system, larger flat screen on the upper level of the Scott Club building, and a second screen on the lower level," she says.

The Scott Club is also considering a parking feasibility study which will provide options to improve parking.

The $43,100 in Mission Support grants is broken down into three areas: $20,000 for Operations; $21,900 for Facility Improvements; and $1,200 for Transportation.

Kunze also pointed out that the facility improvement portion of the grant includes funding toward new round folding tables that will facilitate conversation, particularly for those using hearing aids. "With the installation of an elevator-style lift currently in progress, the new tables would fit in the lift and could be used on either level in the building," she says.

The Scott Club is an all-volunteer organization that depends on donations and grant funding for most of its operational costs and all building improvements. The Scott Club owns its 1893 building, a Michigan historic site, and is responsible for all maintenance and improvements to the facility.

"The MACC grants are vital to the continued success and sustainability of Scott Club, enabling the organization to advance its mission and expand its impact," Kunze says. "Support for MACC was uncertain last fall, and we are deeply grateful that the Michigan legislature ultimately approved the funding necessary to make the FY26 grants possible."

Manhattan Dolls bring a sentimental journey to South Haven

By James Windell

The Manhattan Dolls return to South Haven with their high musical polish and a heavy dose of nostalgia – all with style and authenticity that resonates with audiences.

Returning to the First Congregational Church's music series on Sunday, March 15, 2026, the Manhattan Dolls bring their Andrews Sister's sound recreating the sounds of the 1930s and 40s in in a show that helps people travel back in time on an emotional sentimental journey.

Heather Stricker, the founder and leader of the Manhattan Dolls, was asked how they've been able to capture an audience with their kind of throw back music.

"I think there are a couple of reasons," Stricker said, speaking from her Tucson, Arizona home. "For older folks, they get to enjoy the music that they grew up listening to and see it performed by younger performers. So, it's an opportunity to relive their happy teenage years listening to the music they grew up with. Then the other reason is not only is this heart-felt music that makes you smile but it is amazingly rich music."

By rich, Stricker says that she means that the harmonies are so special and, "If I may be so bold, I just don't think they make music like this anymore," she says. "It's like walking into a musical time capsule."

For those who grew up during World War II and the years following that war, the Manhattan Dolls, through their songs and costumes, recreate such tunes as "Sentimental Journey," "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree," and "Rum and Coca-Cola." These songs will be highlighted in their upcoming concert in South Haven.

"It will be a different concert than last time we were here," says Stricker. "Last time we did more 1950s and 60s music, but this time we will be sharing our most popular concert experience and we call it 'Sentimental Journey.' We will take you through the popular tunes from the 1930s and 40s era in the style of the Andrews Sisters. So it's going to be a concert with even more harmony singing and a lot more choreography."

On a Michigan tour during March, Stricker says that the Manhattan Dolls appeal to more than just older audiences looking to relive their youth. "Yes, we do appeal to a lot of older people," Stricker says, "but what is happening is that their children and grandchildren are coming with them. Sometimes these young people are hearing this music for the first and sometimes they grew up with this music because their parents or grandparents played it for them. Either way, we see young people at almost all of our shows now."

The Manhattan Dolls will perform on Sunday, March 15 at 3:00 pm at the First Congregational UCC, 651 Phoenix Street, South Haven. Tickets are $20 at the door and children 12 and under are admitted free. For more information, call Diane & Lisa at (269) 637-3804 (opt. 5).

World War I Polar Bear Expedition presentation in Lawrence

LAWRENCE - Late in World War I, the United States sent more than 5,000 soldiers to northern Russia at the request of their British allies. The soldiers believed their mission was to guard supplies. But the mission changed.

On Sunday, March 22, at 2 p.m. at the Lawrence Township Hall, 411 N. Paw Paw St., interested individuals will have the opportunity to learn what happened to the soldiers when speaker Nancy Brock presents "World War I Polar Bear Expedition."

The program is sponsored by Van Buren County Historical Society and Museum.

The event is free. Donations are welcomed and appreciated.

VBISD Transition Fair attracts many, "a tremendous success"

LAWRENCE - The Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) Transition Fair, held on Monday, March 9, was a tremendous success, bringing together students, families, educators, and community partners to support the transition from high school to adulthood, according to event organizers.

The event welcomed students from across Van Buren County who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans, along with their families, guardians, teachers, and school staff. Throughout the day, the VBISD Conference Center was filled with energy and meaningful conversations as attendees explored resources designed to help students plan for life after high school.

Students had the opportunity to connect directly with colleges, training programs, service agencies, and community organizations to learn about career pathways, employment supports, continued education opportunities, and independent living resources. For many students, the event provided an empowering opportunity to begin envisioning their future and the possibilities ahead.

"Seeing such a strong turnout and the level of engagement from students throughout the day was incredibly exciting," said Karla Vandenberg, VBISD Consultant and coordinator of the Transition Fair. "We were also grateful for the parents and families who took the time to attend and support their students as they plan for the future. Our vendors were outstanding. They were so supportive, knowledgeable, and truly invested in making connections with students. Events like this highlight the power of bringing schools, families, and community partners together to help students begin envisioning life after high school."

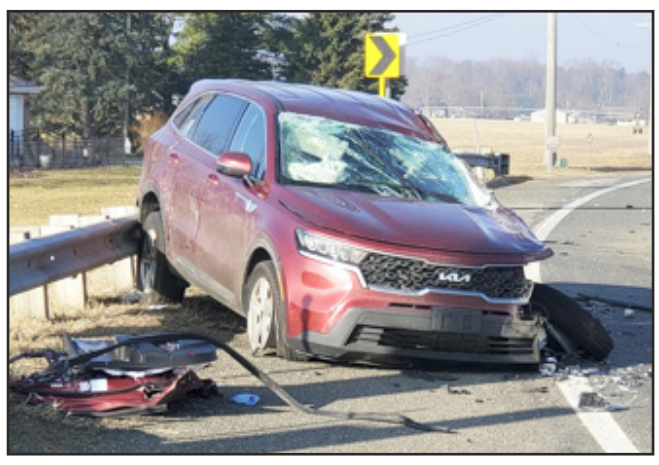
VBISD extends a sincere thank you to the many community partners and organizations that participated and shared their expertise with students and families. "Their support and collaboration helped make the Transition Fair a valuable resource for the entire community," said Vandenberg.

Two vehicle crash injures one driver

Headline - Two-vehicle crash injures one driver
By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP - Van Buren County Sheriff's deputies responded Wednesday, March 4, for a report of a two-vehicle personal injury crash with entrapment at M-51 and 46th Street in Hamilton Township, according to a press release from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office.

Van Buren County Sheriff Daniel Abbott said Sheriff's deputies responded with the Decatur-Hamilton Fire Department and located a SUV with heavy front-end and driver side damage. The driver of the vehicle was entrapped. Decatur-Hamilton Fire Department was able to extricate her from the vehicle. Another adult occupant and an infant were able to exit the vehicle and were uninjured.



According to Sheriff Abbott, the initial investigation determined that a semi tractor pulling a double trailer had crossed the center line at a curve in the roadway while traveling westbound on M-51. The SUV was traveling eastbound on M-51 when the semi-trailer entered its travel lane. The semi-trailer collided with the front driver side area of the SUV, causing heavy damage.

The driver of the SUV was transported via ambulance to Bronson Methodist Hospital, Kalamazoo, and was initially reported in "critical" condition with serious injuries.

The other occupants were uninjured. The driver of the semi was uninjured.

The cause of the crash is being investigated. Anyone with additional information is asked to contact the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office at (269) 657-3101.

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Beautify Pullman receives statewide recognition

Beautify Pullman's efforts to create a feeling of community in Lee Township has been recognized by the Office for Rural Prosperity in their 2025 annual report. The organization continues to improve living in the Pullman area by offering programs at the Pullman Town Square and seeking grants to create paths and sidewalks that provide safe passage around town and to correct some groundwater concerns left behind by Pullman Industries. Photo: Beautify Pullman

By Gari Voss

The Office for Rural Prosperity (ORP) offers a variety of grants that can assist rural communities in reaching visions that would not be possible without monetary assistance. One community that has benefited from the ORP's Rural Readiness Grant program is Pullman. MI thanks to the dedication of the Beautify Pullman team.

ORP realizes that assessments and data are needed for communities to understand what is needed and possible to achieve, while creating a clear vision. Planning helps build agreements about how to reach the vision step by step. This often requires organizing funding and building a network of partners who believe in the project(s).

In the 2025 Annual Impact Report of the Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity, the ORP recognized Beautify Pullman for their diligence in designing the path to achieve their vision for their community.

Beautify Pullman is a small, grassroots nonprofit organization serving the unincorporated town of Pullman in Lee Township, Allegan County. ORP recognized the talents and determination of the group to raise funds and coordinate efforts that would have a significant impact on the Pullman community.

With a Rural Readiness grant and through its participation in the Rural Readiness Network, Beautify Pullman has been able to take advantage of numerous state and federal programs to advance community priorities. Their efforts have brought about tangible results with possibilities to apply for additional investments.

ORP's Rural Readiness Grant program has funded a non-motorized transportation initiative that prepared Pullman to apply for a Safe Routes to School grant. As Beautify Pullman progressed through the process, ORP became a valued partner and assisted in connecting the group to resources such as the Michigan Infrastructure Office.

With the assistance of ORP, Beautify Pullman identified additional funding sources and engaged effectively with the local government, which ultimately resulted in township and county participation in non-motorized transportation requirements. Thus, Pullman is one of only a few rural communities positioned to apply for a Safe Routes to School grant that will garner $652,000 of new investments in non-motorized trails.

Beautify Pullman has already brought a town square complete with a pavilion, play area, and Veterans Memorial. The networking achieved during the process and work with ORP has connected the organization with Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Environmental Justice Thriving Communities grant program, which is providing $75,000 for environmental testing that can lead to effectively planning for community amenities.

ORP's Rural Readiness Network also referred Beautify Pullman to the Environmental Protection Agency's Thriving Communities Grant Making Program that will lead to the funding of more projects in Pullman.

Fundraisers

When all is said and done, the grant programs that have assisted Beautify Pullman complete projects around town are not the only funding source that helps bring people together. The concerts, dinners, summer music programs, movies, etc. require funds. Free events can be offered thanks to fundraisers like the Mystery Dinner Theater and the Spring Online Auction.

Thinking of Online Auction, the Experience Michigan Online Auction will be open from Saturday, March 21, 2026, to March 28th. The wonderful items offered in the auction can be viewed now at https://Experience-Michigan2026.charityauction.bid before the bidding begins on March 21st.

The proceeds will be used to support the numerous community lunches and dinners offered during holidays, the summer music concert and food truck nights, the outdoor movies, and Farmers Markets.

The Beautify Pullman team shared, "We are grateful for your continued confidence and partnership as we build on this momentum and advance Pullman's long-term vitality."

South Haven High School students perform "The Olympians"

By James Windell

The South Haven High School students will be performing a musical you haven't seen before.

Not that we get tired of the classic Broadway musicals that often get performed by high school drama students. However, "The Olympians," which hasn't been on Broadway and has only been around for a couple of years, is a musical that will be captivating for the whole family.

"It's a jukebox musical," says Erin O'Neil, the drama teacher at South Haven High School, "and the kids really love it."

A jukebox musical, O'Neil explains, is a musical with an original book and plot, but one that uses music that has already been written – and in this case is already known by many teenagers and adults.

Among the songs featured in "The Olympians," a musical written by Cara Reichel and

Peter C. Millis, include those by Miley Cyrus, Kelly Clarkson, Blondie, The Chicks, Pat Benatar, and several other well-known musical acts.

The gist of the musical is that three Greek goddesses, Athena, Aphrodite, and Artemis, engage in a bet about how to best advance women's place in the world. They make a wager to determine which is the most powerful tool: a top-notch mind, a loving heart, or a fighting spirit? Each goddess chooses one mortal girl, plucked from obscurity, and sets each of the three girls on a quest to prove their point. When the male gods catch wind of the mortals' plans, they use their powers to make the quests much more treacherous than the goddesses intended. The mortals and the goddesses must decide how best to take on the challenges of the quest, and of the plight of women in the world.

"It's our family friendly show that is good for all ages," O'Neil says. "It's a show about not writing off anybody's limitations and ideas about what you should do or what you should be. It's also about the power of working together at building on our abilities and our strengths."

Twenty-four students will be on stage in the show, but O'Neil says that 11 others will be working backstage with her.

"This show has really been lovely because there are not any standout roles," O'Neil points out. "It is very much an ensemble-driven production and everyone is integral to the plot, including our ensemble dancers."

O'Neil says that she wants to acknowledge four seniors in the production who will be graduating this year. "This will be the final show for Katherine Cox, Serenity Scully, Mahra Rigozzi, and Max Sedlak," she says. "Serenity Scully has done all eight shows with us over the past four years. And Katherine Cox joined us as a sophomore so this is her sixth production. For Mahra Rigozzi this is her fourth show and Max Sedlak is doing his second show. They are all definitely leaders on stage, both in their preparedness and their energy, and their enthusiasm."

She adds that backstage she also has Faith Spies as the stage manager. "Faith has been doing things back stage for last three years and as our stage manager she's been my right hand throughout this whole process."

Commenting on her seniors, O'Neil says that Katherine Cox and Serenity Scully are going to pursue theater in the future. "They've interviewed for some acting jobs at colleges and local places for the summer," O'Neil says. "Hopefully, we'll see them in a production. But I expect big things from both of them in the future."

Performances are on Friday, March 13 and Saturday, March 14 at 7:00 pm, and on Sunday, March 15 at 2:00 pm. Tickets are General Admission and are $10 for Adults and $5 for Southy Haven High School students and senior citizens. Tickets are available online at https://shpsmusicandtheater.ludus.com/200520343 as well as at the door prior to each production.

Berry new president of GOLP women

Sarah Berry, left, was recently elected as the new president of the Van Buren County Republican Women. Berry is shown with VBCRW Past President Robyn Peake.

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There will be a 4-H Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, March 7th from 8:00am to 11:30am at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Bangor.
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VIEWPOINT

A tornado for the ages- so many pitch in to help

When the tornado tore through Three Rivers, Michigan on the afternoon of March 6, it left behind a landscape that residents will remember for years. In a matter of minutes, powerful winds—later rated an EF-2 tornado with speeds near 130 miles per hour—ripped through parts of the city, damaging homes and tearing apart businesses along the busy M-60 corridor.

One of the hardest-hit areas was near M-60 and West Broadway Street, where commercial buildings suffered heavy damage. Sections of roofs were peeled away, storefronts were shattered, and vehicles were tossed or buried beneath debris.

Two images stick in my mind. First the Three Rivers Menards. That huge building is essentially destroyed. The tornado whipped through that area when customers were still shopping. Thankfully no one was hurt. Secondly the drone image of Union City. The drone shows an entire block leveled by the tornado. Every house, every business was left destroyed.

The server for all twelve of our newspapers is located in Three Rivers. As of Monday night, we have no internet. It's amazing how dependent we have become on the interned. Twenty years ago we performed our tasks differently. It took many more hours but probably gave us a greater since of accomplishment. As of this writing I'm not sure what we will do to get our weekly newspapers in your hands, but we will figure it out.

For many residents, the shock of the moment is still hard to describe.

"I heard the roar and it sounded like a freight train," one resident told local reporters while surveying the debris. "When we came outside, the whole block looked different."

Another homeowner described the sudden chaos of the storm. "It happened so fast. One minute it was raining, the next minute trees were down and parts of buildings were everywhere."

The tornado that struck Three Rivers was part of a larger outbreak that swept across southwest Michigan, killing several people in nearby communities and injuring more than a dozen. Officials say the storm system moved rapidly across the region, producing multiple tornadoes in a short period of time.

But while the destruction was immediate and dramatic, what happened afterward revealed something equally powerful: the strength of a small community.

Within hours of the storm passing, residents began helping one another.

Neighbors checked on elderly residents. Pickup trucks pulled into damaged neighborhoods loaded with chainsaws, ladders, and tarps. Volunteers who had never met before spent the next day clearing fallen trees and hauling debris to the curb.

"You see the best in people after something like this," said one volunteer helping clear a yard. "Everyone just shows up."

Local churches and community groups quickly began organizing assistance for families affected by the storm. Some opened their doors to residents who had lost power or suffered damage to their homes. Others began collecting food, clothing, and supplies.

Emergency crews also worked around the clock to secure damaged buildings, clear roads, and restore utilities. Power outages stretched across parts of the region as utility crews worked to repair downed lines and damaged infrastructure.

Even businesses that were damaged joined the recovery effort.

Employees helped clean up debris in nearby neighborhoods before even beginning work on their own buildings. Restaurant owners prepared meals for first responders and volunteers working long hours in the wreckage.

Moments like these remind us what community truly means.

Disasters strip away the routines of everyday life and expose how fragile our surroundings can be. But they also reveal something far more enduring: the instinct people have to help one another.

In the coming weeks, insurance claims will be filed, repairs will begin, and construction crews will slowly rebuild what was lost. The physical scars left by the tornado will take time to heal.

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
■ PUBLISHER ■

The winds may have torn through the town.

But they could not tear apart the community. I believe that to be true with any of our communities. When times get tough, we all step to help any way we can.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Visually impaired group invites all to their meetings

Dear Editor,

The South Haven Area Visually Impaired Persons (VIP's) Support Group has been in existence for over 20 years. People with various eye diseases meet once a month to discuss and share how to get on with their lives with visual impairment as just an inconvenience. They have noticed with the various eye diseases, such as: "Age related macular degeneration, retinal detachment & glaucoma", most of them also have diabetes.

After much discussion the group decided to include diabetes awareness in the meeting agendas, and invite people with diabetes and no visual impairment to the group meetings. Why are we waiting for people to become visually impaired and blind before we help them? Diabetes awareness can and does prevent blindness. The International Association of Lions Clubs has taken this on as a major project.

The VIP Support and Diabetes Awareness Group meet the Third Wednesday of each month at the Senior Services of Van Buren County Center, 08337 -140 Hwy. in South Haven at 1:00 PM. Anyone of any age is welcome. We will invite Nutritionists, Dietitians, Lions Club Diabetes Awareness People & Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, to speak at some of the meetings.

We want the entire South Haven area and beyond to be aware of this sight threatening disease. Our discussions will focus on: How much do you know about how diabetes affects your vision? You're probably well aware that diabetes can cause eye disease and even, in extreme cases, lead to blindness. But how much do you really know about the different ways diabetes can affect your vision? What Vision diseases are caused by diabetes? What percentage of people with diabetes are likely to develop cataracts? Which is the most common form of diabetic retinopathy? How exactly do high blood sugar levels affect your vision?

We will have the answer to all of these questions and more at our group meetings. Caregivers: Please read this to your Visually Impaired loved ones. Ray Llorens - Co-Facilitator Visually Impaired Persons Support Group 269 637-1418 RLloreJ@aol.co

Work continues on Briggs Dam

Construction crews at Briggs Dam have completed all concrete work, according to Paw Paw Village Manager Bryan Myrkle. Myrkle said the contractor has transitioned to back-filling and land leveling. "They are also assembling the new timber bridge, which will be put in place via crane in a few days. That will be followed by installation of the final steel sheeting and removal of the cofferdam. Once that is done, the dam project will be substantially complete. Final work will include replacing all the electrical service that was removed, and which will power pathway and parking lot lighting." Myrkle said there will also be some reseeding and other restoration in areas where the ground was disturbed. According to Myrkle, the Village will also likely need to repave the parking lot, depending on the condition it is left in, and install a new path to and from the bridge. Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

TIPS Offers Free Training for Those Who Serve Alcohol

By James Windell

If you serve alcohol in a restaurant or bar, a free course is being offered especially for you.

The course is called TIPS – Training for Intervention Procedures – and is being offered by Van Buren Community Mental Health Substance Use Disorder Services on March 23, 2026 at Bronson Wellness Center in South Haven.

"TIPS is a skills-based training program that is designed to prevent intoxication, underage drinking, and drunk driving," says Ruth Schwendinger, Certified SUD Prevention Specialist for Van Buren Community Mental Health. "The Van Buren Community Mental Health team that works to prevent issues around alcohol misuse has offered this training at no cost since 2022."

Schwendinger says that they have facilitated a dozen classes resulting in more than 70 individuals receiving the certification. "Our TIPS class meets the certification requirements for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission," adds Schwendinger. "People who pass the exam receive a wallet card with their unique certification number which is good for three years."

Schwendinger emphasizes that the TIPS training course has an international reputation in education and training for the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol. She says that research has found that the program is successful. Furthermore, she says that the five-hour in-person training has been described by attendees as "a great class!" and participants often suggest that others should take it. In 2025, participants said it was better than other alcohol servers training they had received and that they learned a lot more in this course while staying engaged and having fun.

To get more information about the TIPS Program, go to /www.gettips.com/online/alcohol-certification-michigan.

To register for the course at the Bronson Wellness Center, 950 S. Bailey, South Haven on March 23, 2026, starting at 9:00 am, call Ruth Schwendinger at 269-655-3388

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Youth Indivisible Protest, March 14

March 14, 2026, 12 Noon – 1:30 PM in South Haven: Persecute the Pedophiles

South Haven Indivisible's Youth Indivisible Group invites everyone who demands justice for the perpetrators named in the Epstein Files to join them on March 14, 2026, 12 Noon to 1:30 pm in front of the First Congregational Church, 651 Phoenix Street in South Haven. The protest, "Persecute the Pedophiles," focuses on getting justice for the victims and protecting young people who are even now are prey for sexual predators. There will be a postcard writing session at Harbor Light Brewery, 516 Phoenix St, immediately following the protest. "It is important to stand up with Youth Indivisible," states Youth Indivisible leader Ross Rosenburgh, "not with the corrupt elite." For more information or to become involved with South Haven Indivisible, visit southhavenindivisible.org or find them on Facebook.

Delegate training to be offered

LAWRENCE - The Van Buren Republic Women will host a free Delegate Training Session, Monday, March 23, at 6 p.m. at the Van Buren Conference Center, 490 S. Paw Paw St., Lawrence.

Guest speaker will be Lance Griffin, from 10x Votes.

Those attending will learn how to become a precinct delegate, understand their role and responsibility, and step-by-step training and Q&A.

The training is open to all voters and community members

Indivisible organizes South Haven protest

All are welcome to join South Haven Indivisible for the local No Kings 3 Nationwide Protest to protect our democracy on Saturday, March 28, 2026, 1-3 pm, in South Haven. The peaceful, nonpartisan action will be held on both sides of Phoenix Road east of Broadway near the First Congregational Church in South Haven, MI. Residents from throughout the area are are being urged to dress up in their most patriotic costumes to send the message: NO THRONES, NO CROWNS, NO KINGS! The peaceful, nonpartisan action will be held on both sides of Phoenix Road east of Broadway near the First Congregational Church, UCC, in South Haven, MI. Donations will be collected for the First Congregational Church Food Pantry.

Jackson also pointed out that donations will be collected for the Food Bank at the First Congregational Church. "Food insecurity is growing in our community," states Jackson. "In less that a year, South haven Indivisiblee has raised over $3000 for the food pantry."

Visit indivisible.org or nokings.org or mobilize.us for more information on the nationwide protest. For more information or to become involved with South Haven Indivisible, visit southhavenindivisible.org or find them on Facebook.

THE COURIER LEADER
PAW PAW FLASHES
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Lawrence boys and girls basketball wins districts

The last time both Lawrence Tigers' girls and boys won was the basketball districts was in 1996. Now both teams can add 2026 as district winners from the SW10 Conference this year. The boys' team is coached by Noah Wiswary, while the girls' team is coached by Rasaun Brown and Tony Devauld. Seniors on the boys' team include Alex Gardner and Karter Everheart. Seniors on the girls' squad include Carolina Mancera, Evelyn Waite, Kaylin Leyva and Jasmine Vargas. Photos courtesy/Lawrence Public Schools

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWRENCE —Lawrence boys basketball came off a season where they saw a lot of growth and a season where they got better and better throughout the year according to coach Noah Wiswary.

"That showed as they headed into district play and they were able to knock off Martin 65-50 that advanced them into the District Final game against Benton Harbor Countryside Academy," Wiswary said. "Defense was the key component for the Tigers as they were able to hold Countryside to 23 points through the first three quarters.

"Big games were from Alex Gardner who had 12 points 12 rebounds and 10 blocks, Xavier Glover who had 19 points and five assists, and Gabe Doorlag who had 16 points and nine rebounds. They helped surge Lawrence over Countryside.

Wiswary added: "These kids have started to become a player-led team; it is really fun to watch. I can't think of a group that deserves this more than them."

The season ended at 14-11 for Lawrence with a 56-45 loss on March 3 in the regionals to Battle Creek St. Phillip.

Gobles Wrestling earns four All-State honors

Gobles' Finn Carlin, Brody Marshall, Aiden Dukes and Devin Doorlag are each All-State wrestlers.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES — Gobles' Finn Carlin, Brody Marshall, Aiden Dukes and

Devin Doorlag are each All-State wrestlers after placing in the top eight last Friday and Saturday at Ford Field.

For Gobles, Finn Carlin was fourth at 144 pounds; Brody Marshall fifth at 190pounds;

Aiden Dukes wasseventh at 138 and Devin Doorlag eighth place at 150.

'Our athletes defined 'Tiger Tough' this year," coach Erin Carlin said. 'Led by Finn Carlin

and Brody Marshall, who battled through high-stakes matches and personal hurdles all season, this team proved they belong with the best. Both Finn and Aiden entered the postseason as Regional Champions, setting a fierce tone for the entire squad.

'While the season didn't end exactly as Hunter Piper envisioned, punching his ticket to Ford Field as a state qualifier has set avnew benchmark for our returning wrestlers. The bar has been raised again. We also say a bittersweet farewell to our seniors. Devin Doorlag leaves us as a three-time All-State medalist, cementing his legacy as one of Gobles' greats.

"And for Aiden Dukes, finishing his career by walking off the Ford Field mats with a final victory was a moment of pure magic for him and his coaches. It has

been an honor to be part of their journey."

South Haven bowlers enjoy productive season

By John Raffel
Correspondent

SOUTH HAVEN — Gary Guthrie was varsity boys bowling coach for South Haven this season and likes what he saw from his team

'As a first-year coach, I had the privilege of having my son Andrew, a four year highschool bowler from a few years ago, help me coach. So thankful for his help, knowledge, and ability to relate with our guys. The season more than exceeded our expectations. Although we wanted to win our half of the conference, we came up a bit short and finished in second place.

"With that being said, we performed very well at our end of the year conference tournament. This competition was against the entire conference from both sides, which we finished in second place overall. We also had four of our bowlers finish in the top ten in conference."

All-Conference honorees

10th place was Brody Strebeck (senior) with a 158 average.

afifth place was Rylan Jenks (junior/first-year bowler) with a 173 average.

Third place was Jadon Schneider (senior) with a 187 average.

Second place was Ryan O'dell (junior) with a 189 average.

Next on the agenda was Regionals.

"We as a team competed quite well, again finishing in second place. This qualified us for the state tournament, which turns out is the first time ever that the South Haven Boys team had accomplished this feat," Guthrie said. "Needless to say, we were very excited. Second part of Regional is the singles portion, where we did not fare as well as we would have liked.

"Top seven bowlers moved on to State, Jadon Schneider finished in 11th place, just missing the cut. Our anchor bowler, Ryan O'dell, however finished in our now customary place of second place and earned himself a spot at the State tournament."

"As a team we finished state in 12th place, with the top eight teams moving on to bracket play," Guthrie said. "Missing the cut by about 100 pins was disappointing, but in the end we felt quite good about our postseason, end of the year run. Hopefully it will inspire our returning guys to set our goals high for next year and put in some work in the off season to get better.

"As for singles, only the top 16 out of 56 bowlers advanced into bracket play, Ryan O'dell averaged 195 on the day. Although he bowled well, he came up just short by 31 pins, finishing in 22nd place. As a junior, he will have the opportunity to make his way back next year and compete again.

"I am very proud of all the guys, including our JV squad, who did not lose a match all year. A few of them will be moving up to help lift the varsity team up to new heights next season. Super proud and thankful for our Seniors this season who brought stability and consistency to this great season."

Guthrie gave a special shout out to senior first-year bowler, Jacob Bosma, who brought great energy and competitive spirit as a rotating sub.

"His sportsmanship and encouragement will be greatly missed next year. As we look ahead to next season, I am excited to see our two sophomores continue to grow and get better and better," Guthrie said. Carson Brown and Noah Maly were already key rotators for us this year and will move into key starting roles next season. We have high hopes for Rowan Fonseca, Trey Dagget, and Johnny Hammond too, as they all gained a lot of ground this season with their experience on JV, hoping this translates to next season. There are high expectations and big shoes to fill for next season, but I believe we have some good guys to handle the challenges that lie ahead.'

Mattawan girls fall in district finals

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's season ended with a 48-41 boys basketball district loss to Kalamazoo Central on March 4

Mattawan got off to a 12-6 lead in the first quarter, but Kalamazoo Central outscored Mattawan 12-5 during a second quarter rally.

Mattawan was missing point guard Caitlin Ryan during the second quarter after she was poked in the eye late in the first quarter. Kalamazoo Central's pressure in the second quarter led to 11 Mattawan turnovers in the frame.

In the third quarter Caitlin Ryan returned despite some vision issues, but K-Central took a 23-18 lead off of a old fashion 3-point play from M. Amos. Mattawan responded with a quick 8-0 run off of layups by Annemarie Pelak, two from Savannah Waterlander, and Caitlin Ryan to lead 26-23 with 4:20 in the 3rd quarter.

Yazmine Morales responded with a deep 3 to tie the game. Mattawan would add 3 free throws to closeout the quarter, but a Morales putback and two threes by Z. Murphy-Ryan in the final 30 seconds of the quarter gave KC a 34-29 lead headed to the fouth.

In the fourth, Mattawan responded again with a quick 4-0 run by Charlotte Douglass to make it 34-33, KC. K-Central would respond with a 5-0 run. Chloe Nellenback hit a 15-foot-jumper for Mattawan, but M. Blanks responded with a 3 point play off an offensive rebound to make it 42-35 with 5:19 left.

Following two Pelak free throws, a putback by Waterlander and a driving layup by Ryan, it was 43-41 with 3 minutes to play. K-Central's pressure was able to keep Mattawan off balance in the final 3 minutes as K-Central extended the lead with 5 free throws in the final 43 seconds.

Mattawan ends the season 9-13, winning 7 of their last 11.

Mattawan:

Annemarie Pelak (10th) 13 points, 13 rebounds.

Savannah Waterlander (12th) 11 points, eight rebounds.

Caitlin Ryan nine points, five steals, three rebounds.

Rob Kurtz coaches Mattawan.

Gobles boys finish 19-4

Aden Newberry averaged 11.2 points per game this season.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

GOBLES —The Gobles boys basketball team finished with a 19-4 record this year.

The season included the team winning the SAC Central with a 10-0 record.

The team also went on to win the district title before falling to Niles Brandywine in the Regional.

Leading Stat Leaders:

Junior - Carter Crippin 15.8 points, 5.4 assist, 2.4 rebounds this year.

Senior - Aden Newberry 11.2 points 10.4 rebounds this year

Senior - Jayden Otis - 10 points and 8.2 rebounds per game.

Junior - Gibson Curtis - 9 points per game.

Gobles girls basketball finished its season on March 9 with a regional semifinal loss to Niles Brandywine 68-34.

Gobles had two district wins to take the title last week. Gobles defeated Coloma 50-21 and Watervliet 40-32.

Bangor girls close their season

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — One of Bangor's most successful seasons for girl basketball in many years ended with a 39-36 loss to Watevliet in district semifinal action on March 4.

Bangor trailed by 10 early in the second, by seven at half, by 3 at the end of the third and took 35-33 lead in the fourth but was unable to hold the lead.

Bangor had an attempted three-pointer at the buzzer to tie which almost went in.

Macaedo had 14 points for Banger. Wisnewski had 11.

Bangor closes its season with their best since 2012-2013.

Bangor had two wrestlers at the state finals last week but neither placed. Aiden Munoz was 0-2 at 120. Enrique Macedo was 1-2 at 215.

Mattawan skiers earn convenience honors

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's skiing success continues.

Ski coach Jennifer Roethlisberger said the team results were announced and both the boys and girls teams earned conference championships. It is the fifth year in a row for the boys team, and the third year in a row for the girls team.

The conference recognizes the Top 15 skiers as all conference by combining the results of their weekly performances in both the Giant Slalom and Slalom races. This year the following Mattawan ndividuals were recognized:

Girls All Conference; Anna Hoogerheide; first place; Julie Navratilova - fourth place; Avery Huff - sixth place; Tessa Brown eighth place; Karys Lewellyn - ninth place; Hannah Terpstra - 10th place.

Zoey Guyman - 15th Place.

Boys All Conference: JT Roethlisberger - 2nd Place; Everett Allen - 6th Place; Caleb Terpstra - 7th Place; Jacob Block - 10th Place; Mason Allen - 11th Place; Noah Bentz - 13th Place; Anderson Farnquist - 15th place

Girls Slalom and Giant Slalom Awards

Anna Hoogerheide - 1st Place Slalom and 1st Place Giant Slalom.

Julie Navratilova - fifth Place Slalom and fourth place giant slalom

Karys Lewellyn - ninth Place Slalom - 10th Place Giant Slalom.

Tessa Brown - 10th place Slalom - 7th Place Giant Slalom.

Avery Huff - 6th Place Slalom.

Hannah Terpstra - 7th Place Slalom.

Boys Slalom and Giant Slalom Awards

JT Roethlisberger - 3rd Place Giant Slalom and 5th Place Slalom.

Caleb Terpstra - 6th Place Giant Slalom and 8th Place Slalom.

Jacob Block - 10th Place Giant Slalom and 9th Place Slalom.

Noah Bentz - 7th Place Slalom.

Everett Allen - 8th Place Giant Slalom.

State Finals:

Anna Hoogerheide 9th in Slalom, 10th in Giant Slalom (first team all state in both).

JT Roethlisberger finished in the middle of the pack.

"It is an honor to announce that JT Roethlisberger has been awarded the Andy Miller Award for 2026," Roethlisberger said. "The Andy Miller Award is a highly important recognition that is awarded yearly to a Senior skier in our conference. This unique award embodies what the Southwest Michigan Ski Conference is all about. The award goes to the skier that demonstrates a genuine affection for skiing where having fun is the goal.

"Andy Miller was a ski racer who tragically passed away 28 years ago, and his Dad, Bob Miller, presents this award to the winner every year. The award is a travelling trophy and it will spend time at the winner's high school before it returns to its display at Timber Ridge for the next ski season. This year was a first in conference history. As coaches we have been surrounded by such amazing human beings that we couldn't choose just one winner. The winners for 2026 were JT Roethlisberger of Mattawan, and Paige Zeigler of Hackett."

The Award reads:

"Andy Miller loved to ski. Whether he was running slalom gates with his high school team, Portage Central, or helping his little sister learn to turn, his enthusiasm for the sport was obvious. Each year this award is presented to the high school ski racer from West Michigan who demonstrates the same kind of genuine affection for skiing that Andy felt; not necessarily the fastest or most competitive skier, but for the one for whom fun is the goal.

"It is the hope of his family that all who read these words will take a little extra pleasure in their skiing; the exhilaration of a great run in the company of good friends."

Paw Paw wrestler third at state

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw Varsity sophomore Kholby Armijo placed third at the MHSAA Individual State Finals at Ford Field this weekend.

Kholby Armijo went 4-1 during the state tournament, battling through a highly competitive field to secure a spot on the podium. The third-place finish highlights a remarkable sophomore campaign in which he compiled an impressive 49-7 overall record.

"A huge thanks to the coaching staff, including head coach Victor Armijo, Niko Martinez and Jon Ranger for the daily grind, dedication, and commitment they put into helping Kholby succeed this season,"Victory Armijo said. "Kholby's success reflects months of hard work and preparation. The Paw Paw wrestling program also expresses appreciation for the continued encouragement from local community members and the Paw Paw Athletic Boosters for their continued support of our athletes throughout the season.

"With two years of eligibility still ahead of him, Armijo's strong performance at the state level signals a promising future for the Paw Paw wrestling program."

Day 1 recap: 2-1 for the day; Kholby Armijo win by MD 15-5 over Deegan Pike of Cedar Springs, Kholby Armijo win by pin 5:07 over #1 seed Julian Walker of Algonac, Kholby Armijo lose by MD against senior Zane Willobee of Gaylord

Day 2 recap: 2-0 for the day; Kholby Armijo win by pin 2:35 over Deegan Pike of Cedar Springs, Win by Dec 9-6 over Braylon Faile of Three Rivers.

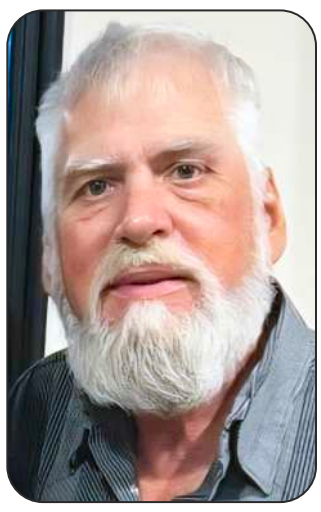
OBITUARIES

Donald (Don) Butler

Donald (Don) Butler 63 of Mattawan, MI Passed away surrounded by his family on March 1,2026 after a brief battle with cancer.

He was born June 2, 1962 in Paw Paw, MI to Paul and Velma Butler. He is survived by his loving wife -Jeannette (Tyler) Butler. Children, Candice (Butler) Hamilton, Emily (George) Allen IV, Benjamin (Jessica) Butler, Rebecca (Billy) Briley. His his sister Judy (Arnie) Redsicker, brother in-law Randy (Connie) Tyler and his former wife and friend Kathy (Butler) Smith. His many beloved grandchildren, Savannah and Maddy Hamilton, Riley Clay, George Allen V, Charli Allen, Gracelynn Allen, Garrett Allen (his birthday buddy) Olivia Butler, Omelia Butler and Hunter and Aleighsia Briley along with many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Don was fiercly devoted to his family and spent most of his spare time with them. Don never met a stranger, and spoke to everyone as a lifelong friend. Don loved working on cars and motorcycles for many years in his shop, before becoming a semi driver traveling all over the US. He was able to see every state, except for Hawaii and Alaska, and had many stories to share about each one. When he wasn't on the road, you could easily find him swinging a golf club on a course somewhere with his friends or his son. He even got his wife learning how to play. He loved the Detroit Tigers and was a dedicated Fan of the Lions. Don was preceded in passing by his parents, sisters Evelyn Berry, Pam Colter, and nephews Jacob Kozul and Eric Phillips. In accordance



with Don's wishes, cremation will take place and a celebration of life will take place at the club house at West Point Hills in Mattawan on April 19th from 2pm to 4pm. Memorial contributions may be directed to the Saint Judes Childrens Research Hospital or the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

Douglas James Mott

Douglas James Mott, 54, of Gobles, passed away suddenly on Sunday, March 1, 2026, at his home in Gobles. He was born Jan. 26, 1972, in Santa Monica, California, the son of Richard Earl Mott and Patricia (Bellane) Stump.

Doug suffered a life changing spinal injury at a young age that left him wheelchair bound; however, it never slowed him down. Music was Doug's biggest passion, performing as a DJ and a talented guitar player. He loved participating in drag racing and anything that had to do with fast cars! He could often be found watching NASCAR. He also enjoyed playing wheelchair basketball and made numerous friendships during his time playing. Doug took pride in his collection of guns, each one of them being meticulously cared for. He loved animals and was often called the "dog whisperer," as every dog always loved him.

Despite all of life's challenges, Doug was a positive person no matter what. He was a motivational speaker and was adored for his strength, resilience, and ability to see in good in everything and everyone. Although Doug's story was far from over, his perseverance and powerful spirit will be carried on through his cherished family and friends.

He is survived by his son, Anthony Mott; daughter, Destiny Mott; grandchildren, Avah, Camden, Karlee, Shelby, Lilly, Seth, and Bella; sister, Aimee (Simon) Drake; mother, Patricia Stump, and beloved K-9 companion, Maple.

Doug was preceded in passing by his father, Richard Mott and dogs, Carma and Max.

In accordance with

Doug's wishes, cremation will take place and he will be scattered in the serene water of the Pacific Ocean. The family is planning a celebration of life for a later date. Please check back.

Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at adamspawpaw.com

Mile Michael Ivezic "Milan"

Mile Michael Ivezic "Milan"
September 10, 1944 – March 8, 2026

Late of Lawrence, Michigan, formerly of Chicago, Illinois and Crown Point, Indiana, passed away peacefully after a long battle with cancer, surrounded by his loving family.

Mile was born in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. A hardworking and dedicated man, he often worked two jobs at a time to support his family. He spent 35 years working as a building engineer in Chicago. Despite his many responsibilities, Mile always made time for the people and passions that mattered most to him - especially his family and his lifelong love of soccer.

His hobbies and interests reflected the joy he found in life and friendship. He cherished spending "buddy time" with friends after their soccer games, and he loved relaxing evenings by the lake around the bonfire with family and lake friends. Mile also enjoyed taking rides on the lake in his pontoon boat. As a family, they created many treasured memories camping in the Canadian wilderness and traveling together to Croatia, France, Slovenia, and throughout the United States.

Mile was a devoted member of Sacred Heart Croatian Catholic Church. He was also involved in several Croatian soccer clubs, including BSK (Marsonia, Croatia), Jadran (Chicago, IL), Hrvat (Chicago, IL), Sting (Chicago, IL), and the All-Stars Soccer Club (Illinois). In recognition of his dedication to the sport, he was inducted into the Illinois Soccer Hall of Fame. Mile was also a member of the Croatian Republic (HRZ – Chicago Chapter) and the Reynolds Lake Association in Michigan.

Was known for his generosity, always giving his time, talents, and resources to help others.

Mile is survived by his devoted and loving wife, Zlata Goldie Ivezic (née Markov). Cherished father, "Tata," of Michael "Miki" (Jennifer) Ivezic, Joseph (Dena) Ivezic, Jasmina Youssef, and Melita (Tamer) Obeid. Adored grandfather, "Dida," to many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He is also survived by his sister-in-law Jane (the late Steve) Ivezic of Skokie, Illinois; Ankica (the late Zvonimir) Slancek; brother-in-law Ivan (Marija) Markov of Croatia; cousins William Zvonko (Jadwiga) Stankovic of Canada, Nevenka (Ivica) Teveli, and Anica (Mirko) Mikolasevic of Croatia; and many beloved nieces and nephews including Zoran (Victoria) Ivezic of Lincolnwood, IL., Steve (Jen) Ivezic of Minnesota, David (Giselle) Ivezic of Maine, Ante (Sylvie) Ivezic and Richard (Veronique) Ivezic of France, and Drazenka (Branko) Buljan of Croatia. He also leaves behind many great-nieces and great-nephews in Croatia, Canada, Germany, and France.

Mile was preceded in death by his parents, Milka (née Stankovic) and Ivan Ivezic; his sisters Lucija and Marija (Marko) Tekic of Croatia; his brothers Tomica (Josipa) Ivezic of Canada, Ivan (Ernestina) Ivezic of France, and Steve (Jane) Ivezic of Skokie, Illinois; his granddaughter Ashley Ivezic of Indiana; and his nephews John (Grace) Ivezic and Thomas Ivezic of Canada.

We find comfort in knowing that Mile's legacy lives on through the lessons he taught, the love he shared, and the memories we will cherish forever.

Visitation and Funeral Services will take place on Saturday, March 14, 2026, directly at Sacred Heart Croatian Catholic Church, 2864 E. 96th St., Chicago, IL 60617, from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the Mass of Christian Burial at 11:00 a.m. Interment will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Arrangements entrusted to Elmwood Chapel, Chicago, Illinois.
(773) 731-2749 | www.elmwoodchapel.com

Douglas James Mott

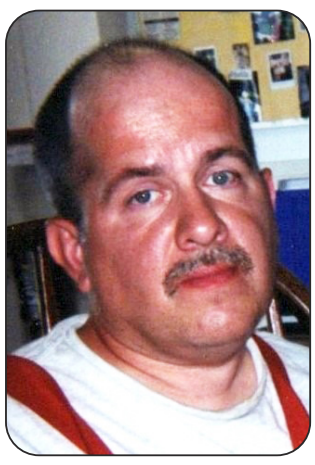
Paul Mitchel Palasinski, 70, of Paw Paw, passed away peacefully, Friday, March 6, 2026, at Medilodge of Westwood, Kalamazoo. He was born July 11, 1955, in Paw Paw, Michigan, the son of Stanley Palasinski and Helen (Freer) Palasinski.

He is survived by his three brothers, Richard (Beth) Palsinski, Peter (Betsy) Palasinski and Stanley Palasinski, Jr.; nieces, Carrie (Dave) Miles and Annie (Billy) Stone; five great-nieces and nephews and many cousins.

Paul is preceded in passing by his parents.

Family and friends are invited to visit on Friday, March 13, from noon until 2 p.m. at Adams Funeral Home, 502 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw. A funeral service will begin at 2 p.m. with Fr. Dave Pinto officiating. Paul will be laid to rest at Saint Mary Cemetery, Paw Paw, immediately following.

Share a memory or sign the online guestbook at adamspawpaw.com



AREA CHURCH SERVICES

PAW PAW

ALMENA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
27503 CR 375
Pastor Dan Phillips
668-2811
www.almenaumc.com
SUNDAY Worship - 11 a.m.
(Childcare Provided)
FRIDAY: AA- 8 p.m.

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COVEY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
33566 28th Avenue
(corner of 28th & M-40)
269-628-2139
www.coveyhill.org
Pastor Daniel Wilson
SUNDAY Worship 10:45am
Nursery & Children's Church provided
Messages available on YouTube

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FAITH OF THE APOSTLES CURCH
34580 M-40 Highway
Elder David Harn
1 (269) 512-4586
SUNDAY
Christian Education - 10 a.m.
Wroship Service - 11:30 a.m.
WEDNESDAY • Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
32464 Red Arrow
Pastor Horace M. "Buddy" Turner... 657-2090
SUNDAY Worship - 11 a.m.
on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/buddyturner2 or search: "Buddy Turner"

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
120 Pine St, Paw Paw
Worship: 10am every Sunday in person or online at - www.pawpawpres.com or www.youtube.com/@1stprespawpaw

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NEW HOPE FAMILY
201 W. Michigan Avenue
Pastor Mark Roberts
www.newhopefellowship.org
SUNDAY Morning Worship - 10 a.m.

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PAW PAW SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CURCH
60409 South M-40
Pastor Sean Reed
Lawn Services - 10am & 11am
www.pawpaw.church
Online worship services on Facebook & YourTube

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PAW PAW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
420 W. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-7727
Pastor Dan Phillips
Sunday Service at 9:30 am

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RED ARROW MINISTRIES
31133 Red Arrow Highway
Rev. G. Ben Bowater, IV
Founding Pastor
SUNDAY Worship - 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.
www.redarrowministries.org for live stream worship

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ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
412 Cedar Street
Handicap Accessible
657-3762 • www.stmarkpaw-paw.com
e-mail: stmarkspawpaw@gmail.com
SUNDAY Worship 9:30 a.m.

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ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
500 Paw Paw Street
Fr. Dave Pinto
657-4459
Weekday:
Monday – no Mass
Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday: 8:00 AM
Wednesday Mass – 9:00 AM
Saturday – 4:00 PM
Sunday – 11:00 AM

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TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
721 Pine Street
Pastor Phillip Phifer
Church: 657-4840
School: 657-5921
Sunday Services 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.

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TRUTH CHURCH
32560 56th Ave. • 657-5042
www.truthchurchpawpaw.com
Pastor Steven Green
SUNDAY
School - 10 a.m.
Evening Service - 6 p.m.
THURSDAY Bible Study - 7 p.m.

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IGLESIA DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO/ CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
30037 E Red Arrow Hwy.,
Pastors Maggie & Jay Salas
Domingo/Sunday: Adoración | Worship- 10 a.m.
Jueves/Thursday: Oracion/ Estudió Bíblico | Prayer/Bible Study- 7 p.m.
(269) 377-6514
(269) 993-6727

LAWRENCE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Corner of Exchange & James Street • 674-8381
Pastor Doug Tipken
SUNDAY Worship - 11 a.m.
lawrencemethodist-church.org for information of online videos

GOBLES

NORTHPOINT MINISTRIES OF GOBLES
04077 M40
269-628-9199
northpointgobles@gmail.com
Pastors: Gary Lounsberry & John Losen Jr.
Sunday: 11am - Morning Worship
Monday: 7 pm - REFRESH Bible Study
Wednesday: 7pm - Prayer Meeting

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ST JUDE' MISSION PARISH
13809 M-40
269-628-2219
Thursday – 10:00 AM
Sunday – 9:00 AM

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GOBLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
210 E. Exchange St., Gobles
(269) 628-2263
Pastor Sheila F. Baker
Sunday: 9:30 a.m. Worship
Children's Sunday School
Website: goblesumc.com
Facebook.com/goblesumc

MARCELLUS

ST. MARGARET MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH
296 E. Dibble St.
Rev. John Tran.
668-3312
Sunday - 9:45AM

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Rev. Ron Packer
269-548-7348
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For mor information or directions call: Neal Ferguson: 269-624-6837 or Ann Nesbitt: 269-624-6781

DECATUR

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80797 M-51, Decatur
(269) 423-5111
Pastor Steven Pace
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Worship 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study & Prayer 5:00 p.m.
facebook.com/DecaturBibleChurch • http://www.decaturbible.org

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DECATUR NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH
319 ½ West Delaware Street
Pastor Ross Tarantino
SUNDAY
Worship Service-10:00 a.m.
TUESDAY
Bible Study-1:00 p.m.
269-423-8136
info@decaturnewhopecommunity.net

LAWTON

DAILY HARVEST MINISTRIES
117 S.Franklin Street
Pastor Jack Shanley
SUNDAY Worship - 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
WEDNESDAY
Bible Study - 6 p.m.

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IGLESIA PENTECOSTES
Eel Movimiento misionero Mundial, Inc.
Bilingual
117 S. Franklin Street
Pastors Arturo & Lourdez Hernandez
(616) 656-0137
SERVICES
Domingo - 9:30 a.m.
Martes y Jueves - 7:30 p.m.
Local: (269) 655-8071

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LAWTON EVANGELICAL CHURCH
425 S. Nursery Street, Lawton • 624-1524
Call if you need help in some way
www.lawtonevan.com
SUNDAY Worship Services - 10 a.m.
We offer Nursery and Children's Church

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NEW COMMUNITY CHURCH
502 N. Main Street, Lawton, MI 49065
Pastor Adam Potgiesser
Sunday Worship 10am
www.nc2online.com • facebook.com/nc2online
(269) 299-2003

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ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
624-1050
Pastor Ashlei Horn
SUNDAY Worship - 10:00 a.m.
www.stpoulsumclawton.com or on Facebook www.Facebook.com/Lawton-St-Pauls-UMC

MATTAWAN

CALVARY COMMUNITY CHURCH
7829 S. 5th St
Pastor Gregory VanHeukelom
375-6240
www.calvaryreformed.org
Website: https://www.calvary-community.church/
Worship still 10 am Sunday with live Facebook
Jody's Closet, a free clothing ministry is open Mon/Tue 10am-12 and Thur 6-7:30pm
And the 1st Saturday of the month 8:30-10am.

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FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
56070 Murray Street
Pastor Chuck Rawsthorne
SUNDAY
School - 9:30 a.m.
Morning Service - 10:30 a.m.
(In person and on Facebook)

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MATTAWAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
23680 Front Ave.
668-3263
www.mattawancc.com
mattawancommunitychurch@gmail.com
Pastor Eric Baird
Sundays at 10:25 a.m

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ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC CHURCH
23830 Front Ave.
Rev. John Tran
668-3312
www.stjbparish.com
Sunday Mass times to 8:00 AM & 11:30 AM Saturday Vigil 4:00PM

DIRECTORY OF CHURCH SERVICES IS PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

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408 Hazen Street
Paw Paw • 657-3141

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CEMETERY MEMORIALS, INC.
56556 Main Street
Mattawan • 668-3350

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314 Paw Paw Street
Paw Paw • 657-6441

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Michigan's Oldest & Largest Winery
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Paw Paw • 657-5568

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504 W. Michigan Avenue
Paw Paw • 657-6347

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

State of Michigan
Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2026-1026-DE
Judge Susan Metzger
Court Address 212 E. Paw Paw St., Suite 220 Paw Paw, MI 49079
Court Phone: 269-657-8225
Estate of JANE MARIE MAYERS, deceased
Date of Birth: N/A
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Jan Marie Mayers, died December 26th 2025, (12/26/2025).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Christine Moon and John Clugston, personal representative, or both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw Street Suite 220 Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice
March 4, 2026
Attorney:
Schuitmaker Moraitis Law Office, P.C.
Christopher N. Moraitis P87052
181 West Michigan Ave.,
Ste. 1, P.O.Box 520
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-31771
Personal representative:
Christine moon
34480 Mill Lake Road
Gobles, MI 49055
269-929-4522
or
John Clugston
1745 Lorna Lane
Otsego, MI 49078
616-437-7704

State of Michigan
Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2026-1026-DE
Judge Susan Metzger
Court Address 212 E. Paw Paw St., Suite 220 Paw Paw, MI 49079
Court Phone: 269-657-8225
Estate of DOUGLAS EARL GREGORY, Deceased
Date of Birth: N/A
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Douglas Earl Gregory, Deceased, died January 10, 2026 (01/10/2026).
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Anna Gregory, personal representative, or both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw Street Suite 220 Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice
March 4,2026
Attorney:
Schuitmaker Moraitis Law Office, P.C.
Christopher N. Moraitis P87052
181 West Michigan Ave.,
Ste. 1, P.O.Box 520
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-31771
Personal representative:
Anna Gregory
416 W. Main Street
Hartford, MI 49057
269-531-2110

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Scott B. Roberts; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 3/12/2026; Atty File #: 25-011281; Insurer: FNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on APRIL 9, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Scott B. Roberts, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Ruoff Mortgage Company, Inc., Mortgagee, dated October 7, 2021 and recorded October 8, 2021 in Liber 1727, Page 117 Van Buren County Records, Michigan.
Said mortgage is now held by Greenway Mortgage Funding Corporation, by assignment.
There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Seven Hundred Eighteen and 73/100 Dollars ($150,718.73).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on APRIL 9, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Antwerp, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Beginning at the centerline of Highway M-119, now M-40, at a point 155.79 feet (previously recorded as 151.84 feet), Northwesterly from the intersection of said centerline and the North and South eight line of the Northeast Quarter of Section 19, Town 3 South, Range 13 West, Antwerp Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; thence North 47 degrees 30 minutes 32 seconds West along said centerline 100 feet; thence South 41 degrees 43 minutes 15 seconds West 250 feet; thence South 47 degrees 30 minutes 32 seconds East 100 feet; thence North 41 degrees 45 minutes 15 seconds East 250 feet to beginning.
60986 M 40, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: March 12, 2026
File No. 25-011281
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400

(03-12)(04-02)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Jose Martinez; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 3/12/2026; Atty File #: 26-000628-1; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 49c of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, 1966 PA 346, MCL 125.1449c, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 09, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Jose Martinez, an unmarried man Original Mortgagee: Amerifirst Financial Corporation Date of mortgage: April 12, 2022 Recorded on April 26, 2022, Liber 1737, on Page 319, Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand One Hundred Thirty-Seven and 24/100 Dollars ($175,137.24) Mortgaged premises: Situated in Van Buren County, and described as: Lot 11, Block 4 of Dodges Addition to the Village of Lawton, according to the recorded Plat thereof, as recorded in Liber K, Page 177, Van Buren County, Michigan.
Commonly known as 238 S Railroad St, Lawton, MI 49065
The redemption period will be 6 month from the date of such sale, unless abandoned under MCL 125.1449v, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 125.1449v(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Michigan State Housing Development Authority Mortgagee/Assignee Schneiderman & Sherman P.C.
23938 Research Dr, Suite 300
Farmington Hills, MI 48335
248.539.7400
1587245

(03-12)(04-02)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: M Brian Knotek; Atty: Plunkett & Cooney - Lisa A. Hall; 1st Pub: 3/5/2026; Atty File #: (N/A); Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County in Paw Paw, Michigan starting promptly at 1:00 p.m. on April 23, 2026.
The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Mortgage (the "Mortgage") made by M Brian Knotek and Kristen H. Knotek, husband and wife, as Mortgagor to Old National Bank, a national association, as Mortgagee, dated September 10, 2014, and recorded September 29, 2014, Liber 1609, Page 121, in Van Buren County Records, Van Buren County, Michigan. The balance owing on the Mortgage is $65,269.01 at the time of this Notice. The Mortgage contains a power of sale and no suit or proceeding at law or in equity has been instituted to recover the debt secured by the Mortgage, or any part of the Mortgage. The Mortgagee will apply the sale proceeds to the debt secured by the Mortgage as stated above, plus interest on the amount due at the rate of 4.25% per annum; all legal costs and expenses, including attorney fees allowed by law; and also any amount paid by the Mortgagee to protect its interest in the property. The property to be sold at foreclosure is all of that real estate situated in the Township of Almena, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, described as: Lot 39, Thousand Oaks No. 3, according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 8 of Plats on Page 22.
Parcel ID: 80-01-552-039-00
Commonly known address: 24271 Thousand Oaks Dr., Mattawan, MI 49071 The redemption period shall be six-months from the date of sale pursuant to MCLA 600.3240(8), unless deemed abandoned and then pursuant to the time frames provided for in MCL 600.3241a. Pursuant to MCL 600.3278, Mortgagor will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Dated: February 27, 2026 Old National Bank, N.A., Mortgagee PLUNKETT COONEY LISA A. HALL Attorney for Mortgagee 333 Bridge Street NW, Suite 530 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504 (616) 752-4615

(03-05)(04-02)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: John Samuel-James Deerwester; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 2/26/2026; Atty File #: 528314F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): John Samuel-James Deerwester, a single person
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): NewRez LLC D/B/A Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
Date of Mortgage: May 20, 2021
Date of Mortgage Recording: May 25, 2021
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,650.25
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pine Grove, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 13, Barber's LakeView Heights, according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 5, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 31337 Baseline Rd, Gobles, MI 49055-9082
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1585341

(02-26)(03-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Margaret Brown; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/26/2026; Atty File #: 528126F01; Insurer: FNMA
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on April 2, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Margaret Amanda Brown, an unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Onslow Bay Financial LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 14, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 5, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $217,767.89
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Porter, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The West 14 acres of the Southwest fractional 1/4 of the Southwest fractional 1/4 of Section 7, Town 4 South, Range 13 West, except the South 7 acres thereof. Together with and subject to a non-exclusive easement for pedestrian and vehicular ingress and egress over the following described parcel located in Decatur Township, County of Van Buren, commencing at the Southeast corner of Section 12, Town 4 South, Range 14 West, according to the government survey thereof; thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West 1317.32 feet along the East line of the Southeast 1/4 of said Section 12 to the North line of the South 1/2 of said Southeast 1/4; thence North 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds West 837.58 feet along said North line to the centerline of County Road 669; thence North 30 degrees 05 minutes 17 seconds East 18.81 feet along said centerline to the place of beginning; thence continuing North 30 degrees 05 minutes 17 seconds East 18.81 feet along said centerline; thence South 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds East 245.88 feet parallel with and 33.0 feet North of said North line; thence South 01 degree 23 minutes 37 seconds West 16.50 feet; thence North 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds West 254.94 feet parallel with said North line to the place of beginning. Also together with and subject to a 16.5 foot wide non-exclusive easement for vehicular and pedestrian ingress and egress across real property located in Decatur Township, Van Buren County, Michigan, described as the North 16.5 feet of that certain property described as: Commencing at the Southeast corner of Section 12, Town 4 South, Range 14 West; thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West along the East section line 608.40 feet (also recorded as North 00 degrees 03 minutes 02 seconds West 608.25 feet); thence North 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds West (also recorded as North 00 degrees 03 minutes 02 seconds West) along the East section line 441.27 feet to the beginning; thence North 88 degrees 37 minutes 06 seconds West 619.66 feet; thence North 00 degrees 02 minutes 13 seconds West (also recorded as North 00 degrees 00 minutes 12 seconds West) 284.30 feet to a line 16.5 feet North of and parallel with the North line of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4 of section; thence South 88 degrees 36 minutes 23 seconds East (also recorded as South 88 degrees 39 minutes 00 seconds East) 619.49 feet to the East section line; thence South 00 degrees 01 minute 04 seconds East (also recorded as South 00 degrees 02 minutes 07 seconds East) along the East section line 284.64 feet to beginning
Common street address (if any): 34297 County Road 669, Lawton, MI 49065-9425
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 26, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1585565

(02-26)(03-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Jason Garcia; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/19/2026; Atty File #: 528265F01; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Jason Garcia, married man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): AMERIHOME MORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 14, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 1, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $287,159.24
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pine Grove, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 1, Woodland Estates, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in Liber 8 of Plats, page 157, Van Buren County Records.
Common street address (if any): 33610 Pinedale Ln, Gobles, MI 49055-8226
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 19, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1584882

(02-19)(03-12)

ARLINGTON TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

The Arlington Township Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed Budget for fiscal year 2026/2027 at the Arlington Township Hall located at: 52022 34th Avenue, Bangor, MI 49013 on March 18, 2026 at 7:00pm.
"The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be the subject of this hearing." A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at the Arlington Township Hall, located at 52022 34th Avenue, Bangor, MI 49013.
The Arlington Township Board will provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon a 3-day notice given to Susan Wilson, Clerk, at 269-427-7300.

NOTICE CITY OF GOBLES

The city of Gobles is seeking proposals from Certified Grant Administrators for management and third-party administrative (TPS) services required for implementation of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded MI Neighborhood Grant through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).

If interested, please submit a request for the proposal (RFP), and submit an application by Thursday, March 26, 2026. Contact by email cityofgobles1@frontier.com.

Paula S. Sipes
Gobles City Clerk

Porter Township, VBCO, March Board of Review

March 3rd, 2026 – Organizational Meeting will be held at the Township Hall, located at 88040 M-40, Lawton at 12:00pm. No appeals will be heard at this meeting.

March 9th – Official MBOR, held at the Township Hall from 9:30am – 3:30pm. Petitions will be heard by appointment and these can be scheduled by calling Krys at (269) 228-3331 or email assessor@portertwpvbco.gov Mailed or Emailed petitions must be received by March 9th at 5:00pm. Walk-ins will be seen as permits.

March 10th – MBOR, held at the Township Hall from 3:00pm – 9:00pm, located at 88040 M-40, Lawton. Appeals will be heard by appointment, which can be scheduled by calling Krys at (269) 228-3331 or emailing assessor@portertwpvbco.gov Mailed or Emailed petitions must be received by March 9th at 5:00pm. Walk-ins will be seen as permits.

NOTICE ALMENA TOWNSHIP CEMETERIES

Please remove all wreaths/ seasonal decorations from the **ALMENA and COVEY HILL CEMETERIES** by March 15, 2026 and all other decorations by April 15, 2026 so that maintenance personnel can prepare the grounds for Spring Cleanup as the township clean up day is scheduled for April 18, 2026.

Please be aware that we will be enforcing our Cemetery Ordinance; we appreciate your understanding. Please see the signs with allowable decorations posted in the cemetery.

ANY NON-CONFORMING DECORATIONS LEFT AFTER THAT DATE WILL BE REMOVED AND DISPOSED OF ACCORDINGLY.

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